

## Recovery Programs

Please visit this site regularly for updated information as it becomes available.

### People, Work and Opportunity

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provides significant financial assistance to workers and families hit hard by the economic crisis. In Vermont, a variety of human services programs stand to benefit from this additional funding, including:

- **Social Security's Economic Recovery One-Time Payments**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides for the one-time payment of \$250 to individuals who get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security benefits. Everyone who is entitled to a payment is expected to receive it by late May 2009. No action is required of beneficiaries. The US Social Security Administration is working on the details regarding how they will issue nearly 55 million one-time payments to beneficiaries.

- **Unemployment Compensation**

The ARRA provides \$40 billion nationwide for extended unemployment benefits through December 31, 2009. Individuals receiving unemployment benefits receive an additional \$25 a week of Federal Additional Compensation through December 2009. For more information on Vermont unemployment compensation, and how to apply for unemployment, go to: <http://labor.vermont.gov/>

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

The federal stimulus package will allow Vermont to request an increased percentage of funds for its TANF program, which provides temporary cash assistance to help families achieve independence. For more information, to find out if you meet the eligibility requirements, and to apply, visit the Vermont Department for Children and Families website: <http://dcf.vermont.gov/>

- **3SquaresVT (formerly Food Stamps)**

Low-income Vermont families who are enrolled in 3SquaresVT will receive increased monthly assistance under the federal recovery bill. To find out more about 3SquaresVT and to apply in person or online visit the Vermont Department for Children and Families website: <http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/3SquaresVT>

- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program**

The federal stimulus package will fund increased participation in WIC, which offers food assistance to pregnant women, new mothers and young children. To find out more about the WIC program and to apply for assistance, visit the Vermont Department of Health website: [http://healthvermont.gov/family/wic/wic\\_vt.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/family/wic/wic_vt.aspx)

- **Child Support Enforcement**

The ARRA repeals cuts to child support enforcement funding through September 30, 2010. Vermont's portion of the \$1 billion restored will be based on the expenditure of performance incentive dollars after October 1, 2008. The Federal Office of Child Support is reviewing the mechanism and procedures through which states may claim the restored match. The value of the restoration will be affected by the method and procedures determination. An estimate of the value will be provided by the Vermont Department for Children and Families once the matching methodology has been defined.

- **Emergency Food**

Due to the federal stimulus package, Vermont will receive additional Emergency Food assistance. For more information on the Emergency Food program and to find the food pantry, shelter, or soup kitchen nearest you, visit the Department for Children and Families website: [http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/emergency\\_general\\_assistance](http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/emergency_general_assistance)

- **Child Care**

Vermont will receive additional funding to expand and enhance the Agency of Human Services current program of providing qualified working families with access to quality, affordable childcare services. For more information on the Child Care program, visit the Vermont for Children and Families website: [http://dcf.vermont.gov/child\\_care](http://dcf.vermont.gov/child_care)

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

Vermont will receive funding to enhance and expand its Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, helping people with disabilities across Vermont find and keep jobs. To find out more about the VR program or to apply for services, visit the website: <http://vocrehab.vermont.gov/>

- **Independent Living**

Vermont will receive extra funding for its Independent Living Program that DHS administers in partnership with the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), providing information, referrals, and services to persons with disabilities that help them live and work in community settings. Visit the DAIL website: <http://dail.vermont.gov/>

- **AmeriCorps**

Additional funding from the stimulus package will allow for the expansion of the current AmeriCorps Program Portfolio, increasing the number of programs and members. To find out more about the Vermont Commission on National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps Program, visit: <http://www.state.vt.us/cnccs/ameriCorps.html>

## Education

\$53 billion dollars of the ARRA is dedicated to education and training, including K-12, higher education, and job training programs. Additional information on education and training programs will be provided here as it becomes available.

- **Pell Grants**

Vermont students and families can take advantage of the \$15.6 billion in additional funding for the Federal Pell Grant Program by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). And the sooner the better -- the longer students wait to fill out their FAFSA, the smaller the pool of available funds becomes. There's no need to wait until tax forms are completed, apply today. <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

- **K-12**

Preliminary numbers show the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will provide nearly \$63 million in additional funding for several existing programs, including Title I, special education programs, and educational technology. The Vermont Department of Education will be creating a page on its web site to post detailed information as it becomes available. Please check back for a link to this site.

## Energy and Environment

\$43 billion dollars of the ARRA is appropriated for investments in energy, including the Weatherization Assistance Program; repair of federal buildings to increase energy efficiency; fossil energy research and development; research in renewable energy; programs in alternative fuels, smart and energy efficient appliances; and modernization of the electric grid.

- **Weatherization**

The Vermont Weatherization Program (VWP) enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. VWP provides weatherization services such as sealing cracks, insulating attics and walls, repairing and replacing windows and doors, and repairing and cleaning heating systems. For more information on the VWP, please visit: <http://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/weatherization>

- **Environment**

The ARRA provides billions of dollars to states to clean up former weapon production and energy research sites; improve local water infrastructure and waste disposal facilities; and fund environmental cleanup programs such as Superfund. The funding for many of these projects will flow through existing programs administered by the Vermont.

## Employment Assistance & Job Training

ARRA provides states with employment & job training funds to assist youth and adults find jobs or gain new skills. Individuals may access these services through the Vermont Department of Labor's local career resource centers. A list of those centers can be found at <http://labor.vermont.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=285>

- \$500,000,000 for grants to the states for adult employment & training activities. Priority use of these funds shall be services to low income individuals.
- \$1,200,000,000 for grants to states for youth activities, including summer employment for youth. Economically disadvantaged youth with barriers to employment may receive services under these grants.
- \$1,250,000,000 for grants to states for dislocated worker employment & training activities. Dislocated workers are individuals who have lost their jobs and are unlikely to return to the same occupation or industry.

## Health Care

\$59 billion dollars of the ARRA is dedicated to investments and improvements in health care, including funding for cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease and stem cell research; interoperable health information technology; prevention and wellness programs; and the improvement of National Institutes of Health (NIH) facilities.

The Medicaid federal match rate (FMAP - Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) is increased from its current 50.32% to 60.48% for nine federal fiscal quarters, dating back to October 1, 2008. State funds must first be used on qualifying Medicaid services to qualified individuals before the enhanced match may be drawn. The legislation requires that states meet federal prompt payment standards to be able to receive the enhanced FMAP monies. To maximize federal matching funds, the majority of the increased funding will likely need to be used to meet prompt payment requirements. To qualify for enhanced Medicaid match funds (FMAP), Vermont may not decrease Medicaid eligibility. Further, enhanced FMAP is not applicable for costs associated with eligibility expansions that may occur after July 1, 2008. States must report to Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on how enhanced matching funds are expended.

For more information on FMAP and other health care-related stimulus programs in Vermont, please visit: <http://ovha.vermont.gov>

### • COBRA

Recession-related job losses are threatening health coverage for many families. To help workers maintain their health coverage while they are between jobs, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides a 65% reduction in the premiums payable by involuntarily terminated workers and their families for health care continuation coverage under COBRA. This premium reduction will last for up to 9 months. Workers who have been involuntarily terminated during the period from September 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009 and their families are eligible. This premium reduction also applies to health care continuation coverage that may be required by states for insurance policies sponsored by small employers (so called state mini-COBRA's) and public employees. This provision will help 7 million people maintain their health insurance by providing a vital bridge for families when workers have been forced out of their jobs as a result of the recession. For more information visit: <http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html>